



OUR TOWN

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS

MARCH 2021



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Neighborhood Farm Stands

One of the most comforting sights during the past year, while enduring the COVID-19 pandemic, is a neighbor visiting one of the three quaint, inviting neighborhood farm stands and obtaining fresh fruit or finding a book to read. Other times, you will see a car pulled over as a town resident stocks the farm stand with locally-grown items like tomatoes, lemons, honey, or eggs. These locally-owned and managed farm stands evoke the town's agrarian roots and the importance of neighbors working together to help each other during challenging and uncertain times. There is also a certain joy that comes with sharing home harvests with your neighbors.

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Why a Farm Stand in Los Altos Hills?

RA-1 — that is where it all starts. When I was a child, my family used to bike down from locations up the Peninsula into Los Altos Hills. I remember vividly thinking “what is this farming community doing here next to sophisticated Palo Alto?” We would go by cows in pastures and folks riding their horses. The open orchards and ranch fencing clearly was intentional. Years later I moved to Los Altos Hills and became involved in the town and learning about what makes the town unique.

The town is zoned as RA-1, short for our very special zoning code - (R)Residential (A)Agricultural - 1 (Single Family homes). The agricultural zoning offers us some unique permissions and some other restrictions. The town has always been a mix of home farms that use the agricultural part of our zoning to have farm features that most communities around us can not have like horses and cows.

Farm Stand Inspiration

In August 2013, I took a road trip with my family and visited Salt Spring Island in the Gulf Island chain, north of Victoria, BC. The inspiration for LAH Farm was based on the many home community farm stands on Salt Spring, selling or sharing their locally grown produce for the community and any visitors (shown below).



In September 2013, a group of neighbors built our first farm stand out of mostly recycled wood on the corner of Manuella and Fremont Road. It would be the perfect place to sell or share local honey, eggs, and produce. It offered a space for neighbors to share in the bounty of their summer harvests. It also included a book share similar to other tiny share libraries (shown below).



Everything from Honey and Eggs to Pumpkins

Within a few months, the stand had offered a variety of products from several neighbors with tomatoes, lemons, basil, pumpkins, apples, persimmons, honey, eggs, cucumbers, and pomegranates.

Community Harvests

In 2014, we had our first community Harvest. At a neighbors house, we harvested grapes and apples we shared among the harvesters and left bins of extra apples and grapes at the farm stand too. Other harvesting groups have continued the tradition of extra bounty from our backyards and shared it at the farm stand. It's an easy and local way to share fruit from your yard trees that you can't consume yourself.

Top: Residents gather to celebrate opening day for Community Farm Stand II, created by Yibin Tang, located on the corner of Burke and Fremont Road.

Above: Jessica Campbell drops off arugula at a farm stand.

Facing page, top upper left: Jill Dallas picks up grapes and apples from community harvest.

Top left: Yibin Tang with her dog in front of her new Community Farm Stand II.

Top angled photos (l to r): Herbs donated by Melissa French. Seed share box. Merkley kids (Beckham, Liberty and Saylor) sell walnuts grown by their family.



Seed Share

In 2015, we added the Seed Share station where resident farmers who had collected seed could share their local seeds and information to help to grow them successfully.

Seedling and Herb Share

Occasionally, resident Melissa French would harvest her variety of herbs of Mint, Epazote, Thai Basil, and Rosemary and offer herbs for neighbors to use or plant.

Other residents would drop off seedlings of tomatoes or even pumpkin starts from local master pumpkin grower Vince Zunino. Kids in the neighborhood could then start to grow their own giant pumpkin.

Book Share

One of the features of the farm stand that resident Karen Drucker (pictured below) helps to maintain is the book share. "We pass by the stand every day and peruse what's new. Julie often finds a book she thinks her grandchildren will like. I often find a book that's a prior bestseller, and that sells it to me. I love to read and belong to two book groups. I firmly believe that the information in a used book is just as interesting and entertaining as a new book. Many are grateful for this Community service."

New Additional Community Farm Stands Sprout

Local resident Yibin Tang decided she wanted her own stand for her neighborhood, and in 2019 the Community Farm Stand II at the corner of Burke and Fremont Road was built. A large neighborhood opening event celebrated the second farm stand on Fremont Road.

Also in 2019, a third community farm stand was launched on Robleda Road (pictured on cover) which has been relocated to Campo Vista and Fremont Road. This stand features an even larger book share area in addition to the standard produce and honey options.

Local Families in Farming

The Merkley family (pictured above) has been cracking and selling walnuts from their grandpa's farm for years. "We love the farm stands. Every fall during harvest season we gather lots of walnuts from our family farm in the Sacramento Valley and the kids (Beckham, Liberty, and Saylor) crack and sort them into half-pound bags. We have the classic white Chandler walnuts as well as a rare red variety called Livermore. Cracking walnuts is lots of work, especially for little hands. But the kids love earning spending money and adding to their college savings accounts."

Plans and Inspiration for More Community Farm Stands

The three current Community Farm Stands are clustered around Fremont Road. If you are looking for inspiration to construct your own community farm stand, you will find many ideas and resources at the UrbanFarmStands.org website, as well as contact information. Note that farm stands are regulated by Town Ordinance, Section 10-1.702 (Accessory Uses and Structures Permitted in the R-A).

Scott Vanderlip is an active town volunteer and organizer with the annual pathways run, community farm stands and now community fiber internet projects.



HAPPY 65TH BIRTHDAY TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS!

The Town of Los Altos Hills was incorporated on January 27, 1956, by a vote of 424 to 339 — a participation rate of 65%. It took great vision, spirit, and effort on the part of our founders to incorporate our community as a town and preserve this semi-rural way of life for future generations. As beneficiaries of this achievement, it is now our responsibility to build upon that vision and to recommit ourselves to preserving the semi-rural community that drew us here and that we deeply cherish. The value of such a close-knit community has never been more evident than during the coronavirus pandemic.

January 2020, the beginning of a new decade, brought much hopefulness and positive expectations to the world. However, within a few months, new unexpected challenges came in the form of COVID-19. Sheltering in place and working from home in response to the public health crisis became commonplace. At Town Hall, we didn't close down, but we dramatically changed the way we conducted business. Public meetings were held online via Zoom. The public counter at Town Hall was moved outdoors. We all wore face masks and practiced social distancing. Along with the pandemic, we had a wildland fire season that hit especially close to home and turned the skies over Los Altos Hills an eerie orange color with ash falling out of the sky. Concurrently with the fires, elements of the cash-strapped county government were busy trying to dissolve the Los Altos Hills County Fire District to get the funds. A mobilized citizenry made their voices heard at the

FROM THE CITY MANAGER

Board of Supervisor's meeting and the County's plan has been continued at this time to study the matter further. On top of all that, there was an increase in residential burglaries. In the 2020 calendar year, Los Altos Hills experienced 31 residential burglaries — 10 more than in 2019 and above the 10-year average of 26.5 residential burglaries per year.

Captain Rich Urena of the Santa Clara County Office of the Sheriff encourages residents to lock all doors and windows and to use alarm systems. Moreover, he recommends resident involvement to prevent crime in the community. Vigilant neighbors, which outnumber Sheriff's deputies, can be vital witnesses to potential and in-progress burglaries. If residents see something out of the ordinary or suspicious, they should immediately dial 911 and report the activity so that deputies can investigate.

Residents should also know that the town is taking immediate action to address the residential burglaries:

- On January 21, Captain Urena gave a presentation on crime statistics in Los Altos Hills to the town council (the link to the meeting can be found on the town's website);
- Staff worked with the Sheriff's office to schedule a crime prevention forum that took place the last week in January. The forum provided the public an opportunity to learn about crime trends in town and ask questions on how to prevent future home burglaries; and
- Town staff is actively recruiting residents to help organize Neighbor-

hood Watch programs for their streets or neighborhoods.

Town staff wants to partner with residents to create new Neighborhood Watch programs street by street to increase public safety throughout the community. The goal is for residents to better know their neighbors, watch out for each other's property, and report suspicious activity to the Sheriff. In the program, groups of neighboring residents will have an orientation with the Santa Clara County Office of the Sheriff and learn the basics of how a neighborhood watch program works. Upon completion of the orientation, each neighborhood group will have the option to receive neighborhood watch street signs to display on the streets near their homes.

Robust Neighborhood Watch programs in other cities such as Cupertino and Saratoga likely contributed to a reduction in property crimes. Cupertino and Saratoga are communities that are also served by the County Sheriff. Both cities had lower residential burglary rates than Los Altos Hills this past year.

To kickstart the program, we are seeking leaders to gather a group of neighbors together who are dedicated to reducing residential burglaries. If you and members of your household would like to be a part of this program, please contact Management Analyst Cody Einfalt (650-947-2508) at Town Hall. We are looking to get as many residents involved as possible. A small fund exists for participating neighborhoods to use for minor meeting and outreach expenses.

Planning and Building Services During the Pandemic

It has been a long 12 months since Covid-19 took center stage and completely changed the way we do business. In a small town like Los Altos Hills, in-person meetings, face-to-face conversations, and over-the-counter plan reviews have been a cornerstone of how we accomplish business. Submitting hardcopies of a permit application and a paper check were taken for granted. Then, when the COVID-19 reality set in, we were left scrambling with how to maintain and adapt our services while making sure that we were accessible to all of our residents.

The transition has not been easy, and we are continuing to adjust and improve to keep our staff and residents safe while providing the best customer service that we can. Though many of our communications now take place virtually, we still have an outdoor public counter at Town Hall that is open daily (9:00 – 11:00 am and 2:00 – 4:00 pm) with Building and Planning staff available to answer questions and process applications. We have enhanced our website with more information, such as virtual Site Development Meeting resources and an enhanced GIS map portal, offer virtual meetings with a planner upon request, and can accept many permit applications electronically. But, we also continue to provide the option to meet in-person (socially distanced with a mask) when needed to ensure that the Town's Planning and Building services are fully available to all of our residents. Our website is www.losaltoshills.ca.gov and you can reach each department directly: Planning – (650) 941-7222; planning@losaltoshills.ca.gov. Building – (650) 947-2501; building@losaltoshills.ca.gov. Code Enforcement – (650) 947-2505; codenforcement@losaltoshills.ca.gov

Zachary Dahl, AICP, Planning and Building Director, zdahl@losaltoshills.ca.gov

A Family's Response to the Pandemic

In late January 2020, I traveled to Los Angeles. At LAX, I immediately noticed that people from various countries were wearing masks. Clearly, something bad was coming. When I returned home and news of the pandemic was appearing, I was rather surprised at the indifference regarding wearing masks compared to other countries, like South Korea, Singapore, and Australia that were being very proactive. Perhaps most Americans believed that no virus could touch us. But then it happened. And like most people, I felt so overwhelmed and helpless. Our family realized that the shelter-in-place orders gave us time to assess how we would respond constructively to the pandemic.

How could we assess our strengths and talents to make a bad situation better? How could we strengthen our family and contribute to our neighborhood and the larger Los Altos Hills community?



masks. We posted information on NextDoor and placed the face masks in the community farm stand on Fremont Road. The inventory was quickly exhausted. Soon, neighbors were sending kind notes of encouragement as well as requests for custom sizes and extra masks. I really enjoyed learning about our neighbors. Some returned the favor, by providing us with supplies (like fabric and elastic that became scarce) as well as homemade baked goods, like persimmon bread and raspberry jam. We continued making masks for a few months until masks became more mainstream and were readily available.

Making Wine

My husband, Shiri Kadambi, is a serial entrepreneur who enjoys mentoring startups. He mentored a start-up in the Midwest that went on to win the First Prize in the tech space. During the pandemic, he embarked on a new hobby: making wine. In just a few weeks our home was transformed into a chemistry "nursery." He transformed the grape liquid into a fine wine. Through diligent research and an investment in equipment, he became a true winemaker. Each day, he took the wine's temperature, monitored the pH level, Brix level, and specific gravity. We had fun designing a logo and labels for the bottles. We hoped

that we would end up with something like a \$20 bottle of pinot noir. We actually were so pleased that it rivaled every wine we had tasted in its clarity, body, bouquet, and taste. In fall, we went to Napa to harvest wine grapes in a socially-distanced fashion for the next batch.

Teaching Others

The pandemic impacted the education of my daughter by delaying her PhD. I never heard her complain once. Instead, she counted her blessings and thought about the people who were impacted more severely. She continued to delve deeper into her research at UCLA. She also learned that many of her friends had lost their jobs during the pandemic. She brainstormed with a few colleagues/ friends and together they spearheaded a mentoring program for foster kids who were really struggling through the pandemic.

Our son graduated with a PhD three years ago. He conducts research and teaches, although classes are online now. He is working with colleagues at

his university's medical center to develop nontouch screen tools as part of several research projects.

Reconnecting with Friends

The many months spent sheltering in place was a time to reconnect with old friends. I got in touch with many of them and I made it a priority to renew ties. My goal was to connect at least one friend a week. We specifically called seniors and checked on them more often. We appreciated the calls as much as they did. It gave us all the chance to feel that we were not alone during these difficult and uncertain times.

Becoming Students

Afforded so much spare time during the pandemic quarantine, we decided to become students once again. We learned new skills or expanded existing ones through online classes. Over the months we explored cooking, astronomy, photography, I continued writing blogs (www.theinkybee.com), creating art, and studying new topics. I took a course on Sanskrit, an ancient Indian language. I recently completed the final level. I was able to share some of this newfound knowledge with my family and friends.

Reading Books

The pervasive pandemic did not dampen the enthusiasm of our local book club. The members smoothly transitioned online thanks to the resourceful efforts of Ann Duwe. AnneMarie Rosengreen kept us connected and informed. We decided to avoid novels with tragic or melancholy themes, focusing instead on themes of resilience, joy, inspiration, and humor. Ginger Summit introduced the idea of having each member share and discuss a favorite poem. At each meeting, we conclude with an expression of gratitude and appreciation of the camaraderie and thoughtful discussion.

Indu Kadambi and her family have lived in town for more than 20 years. She enjoys traveling, reading, writing, building things, and sharing cultural experiences. She has taught in the local school district and inspires life-long learning.



Making Face Masks

The first thing that came to mind was making face masks for fellow residents. Even though they were not 100% virus proof, at least they help reduce the chance of infection and serve as a reminder of social distancing. So in March, my husband and I learned a new skill: sewing. We purchased a sewing machine, thread, yards of cotton fabric and strips of elastic and went to work making hundreds of fabric

The Evolution of Town Hall

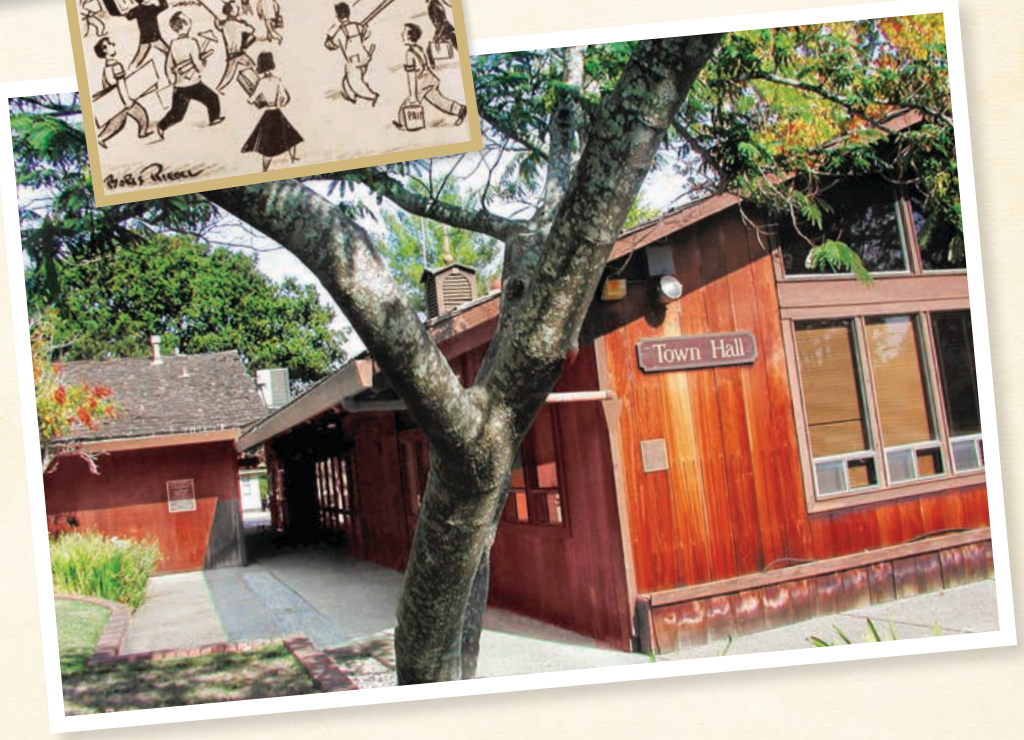


Since the town turned 65 on January 27, 2021, it is fitting to look back at its early years. Back in 1956, there was a sudden need to build a town hall. The urgency occurred when the residents narrowly passed a measure to incorporate the area (about nine square miles with a population of 2,500) as a town to be named Los Altos Hills. This new town faced two problems: it did not have a town hall and it lacked the funds to build one. It fell to some generous residents to help make that happen. Arthur Fowle donated a portion of his orchard land on which to build it and Earl Dawson headed up the monetary donations with a gift of \$25,000. Added to this were donations of materials and volunteer labor from other residents to construct a seat for the nascent government.

Another resident, and leader of the founding committee, Bill Simrell was the volunteer architect who designed a building based on the “simple shoebox” school of architecture. A four-sided

rectangular building with a peaked roof, entrance doors at one end, and windows along the sides. Council meetings were held in a room with an office desk at which the council members sat. The Mayor sat in the middle of the long edge, flanked by a council member on each side, and another council member sat at each end of the desk. Then there was room for about a dozen audience members if some of them remained standing.

Within a year, the building was extended by another 12 feet to allow the council chamber to expand, and make room for the Town Manager to have



his own office. The resultant building lasted for 18 years until 1975 when the ever increasing size of town staff forced the construction of a separate building dedicated to function as Council Chambers and some public facilities.

The original building contained two notable embellishments. The first was the cupola on the roof. This cupola gained iconic status as its silhouette was included in the Town's logo (depicting the original Town Hall with the backdrop of the rolling hills). The other embellishment was the design of a stained glass window created by a resident and mounted in the building.



Over the next three decades, the population grew as the town evolved from its orchard origins to upscale suburbia,

again with resulting pressure for increased office space for more staff. An architectural design was commissioned from a respected firm of architects from San Francisco. They provided some color renderings of a conceptual design that reflected a Spanish Hacienda type of architecture. These were well-received by the Town Council who had commissioned the work. But the conceptual drawings caused uproar among the neighbors. One resident, who was not pleased, described the design as an example of "La Quinta Motel" school of design.

A well-respected architectural firm, Duxbury Architects, known for its experience and sensitivity to local tastes, was called in and started from scratch. (Unfortunately, Peter Duxbury passed away in July 2020.) The firm presented a building design influenced by the Craftsman style that reflected more closely the ethos of the town. Construction



was started in 2004 and completed in mid-2005.

The two embellishments of the original Town Hall survived its demolition. The stained glass window was mounted in the wall immediately to the left of the front entrance to the main office building. The cupola was repurposed as a decorative monument, mounted on a plinth located in front of the Council Chamber wall that faces Fremont Road. And the time capsule? A new one was assembled containing a variety of artifacts, and stashed in an appropriate location to be found some time in the future.

As we enter the year 2021, further growth in town services and resulting need for increased office and meeting space has us well into the process of planning and budgeting for the next evolutionary phase in Town Hall.



During construction in 2004, a forgotten time-capsule was discovered. Unfortunately, the metal box was not properly protected against the elements and all the contents were damaged by moisture. The box contained a bottle of liquor with an illegible label and several soggy documents in a three-ring binder.

Jitze Couperus is a long-time resident of Los Altos Hills and a member of the history committee. Photographs courtesy of Jitze Couperus.



The Journey of Five Million Steps

This is the second part of a two-part story by resident Kayo Hartenbaum who hiked the Pacific Crest Trail from March to August, 2020.

I woke up at 3:30am to reach the pass early in the morning before the sun had a chance to turn the icy snow into mushy snow. (My microspikes would have a better purchase on icy snow. Mushy snow means floundering around and wasted exertion.) I had eight miles and a glacial river crossing before I reached the “approach to Forester Pass,” which was also marked with an icon on my navigation app.

The river crossing was large, and fast, and freezing — I went a third of a mile upstream to where tributaries split and the flow wasn’t as raging to cross, and cursed up a storm as my icy feet slogged slowly through the water. I might have been more hesitant to cross it alone, but there had been three people asleep in their tents at the crossing. If I went down, I figured I could scream for help and they’d let the authorities know where to search for the body. But I’d rather not die that way. And I didn’t. Hurray.

I reached the “approach” around 9:00 am. All the way up, I’d been wondering why the app had bothered

to point out an “approach.” I’d been

coming uphill and into the snow for hours. Why make a point of defining an “approach”?

I arrived at the “approach” and looked up. Ahead of me was a sudden, steep upward slope of icy snow, the trail invisible beneath it, save for the barely-there traces where other people before me had left behind their spiked bootprints.

“Ah,” I said, out loud. I got out the microspikes, strapped them to my feet, and picked up my ice axe.

I went slowly, holding my axe at the ready should I slip and start an unwelcome gravity-powered descent. Up, and up, and up.

At the top of the pass was a view that can only be experienced in person. Snow-struck mountains, glacial blue lakes. So high up I felt embedded in the sky itself. My heart was pounding from the exertion and the delight of it all. If I could handle this, I figured I could handle the rest of the trail.

In the nine days after Forester I crested seven Sierra passes (Kearsarge twice, to fetch a resupply). A side-effect of COVID-19 was that it gave me the precious opportunity to traverse the Sierras in solitude. I’ve been told that the Sierras are usually packed with day-hikers and section-hikers, but this year I only came across a handful of fellow thru-hikers.

This stretch is often cited as the most show-stopping section of the

PCT, and it certainly lived up to the hype. Sometimes it was almost difficult to believe that I was really there, really walking through this landscape that looked like it had been pulled from photographs. I took my own photos, but they never lived up to standing there and seeing it in person. I was grateful, each day, for being there. (Except perhaps that time I floundered up to my thighs in snow while coming down from Muir Pass, having punched through the upper layer into the rushing, icy river beneath. Ah, good times.)

The Low Point

I reached the halfway point — mile 1,326 — and celebrated. But almost immediately, I realized that I’d have to do all the distance, all over again. Almost four months had passed since I’d started. I wanted to reach Canada before the snow arrived in Washington, which could happen as early as September. At this point I’d finally picked up to a nearly respectable thru-hiker speed, and I settled into a steady rhythm of 20-25 miles per day.

This is when the psychological challenge of the trail emerged. I struggled mentally to stick to the trail through Northern California and the early parts of Oregon. Despite the ongoing wonder and beauty of the trail, I was physically, mentally, and spiritually exhausted. There were days where I spent the entire morning thinking of all the reasons why I should quit, and then spent the entire afternoon talking myself back up to reaching just the next resupply point. The PCT is long. It’s a marathon, not a sprint. Or, more accurately, it’s a series



*Above: The Sooty Grouse (*Dendragapus fuliginosus*) displaying for a mate near Onion Valley Campground off Kearsarge Pass in the Sierras. Below (l to r): Bullfrog Lake west of Kearsarge Pass; a family of mountain goats spotted on trail just north of Snoqualmie, Washington; mountain range viewed from just outside Sequoia National Forest the day after a blizzard; Snow Plant (*Sarcodes sanguinea*) near Big Bear.*



marathons for months on end. It can be mind-numbing, and the psychological challenge of sticking to the trail at mile 1,856 is greater than the physical challenge of merely walking yet another twenty miles. It's one thing for your feet to be sore. It's another thing to be fully aware that all this sore-foot-suffering is entirely self-imposed and you could quit at any time.

Dogged stubbornness, trail support from my father, and a four-day break halfway through Oregon got me through. As the end started to pull into reach, I reconnected with the excitement and the beauty around me. And then I was at the border of Oregon and Washington, crossing the Columbia River on the Bridge of the Gods, and I thought, "Oh. Am I actually going to make it?"

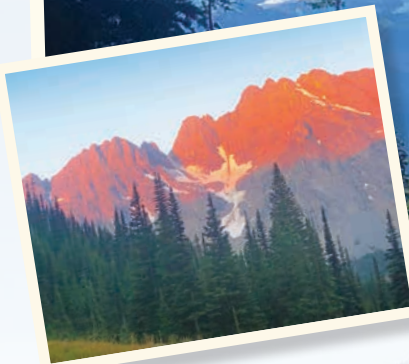
In a lot of ways, I'm extremely lucky. I was lucky to be able to do this. Lucky to get good weather. Lucky to have family who supported me. I felt that good fortune every day.

The End of the Journey

Then, rather anticlimactically, I reached the Canada border, snapped some photos, and backtracked a few miles to a campsite. It was surreal. It hadn't really sunk in that this massive thing that I had set out to complete, that I'd spent months marching towards, was finally done. I'd seen so many things. Met many kind and interesting people, even if I spoke to them only briefly in my self-imposed COVID isolation bubble. The last six months stretched out behind me, and I could picture the trail through all of it. Time passed differently, on the trail, marked by miles and milestones, each day fundamentally the same in structure but bringing new sights and achievements. That last day mostly felt like any of the other hundred-and-eighty-something prior days of the journey. Maybe the enormity of it would sink in later.

The trail had become a part of me, in a physical way I hadn't even noticed. It had felt so long, so impossible, so infinite and out of reach that I'd hardly allowed myself to think about reaching the Canada border. But I was finally at the Northern Terminus.

As I backtracked the 30 miles south to meet my father at Hart's Pass, I bumped into hikers I hadn't seen in weeks or months. Elation propelled me through the last ten miles. I felt like I was practically flying, despite the knee I'd tweaked some two hundred miles back and put in a brace to keep the pain down. I'd done it! I'd done it!



Top: A view of Mt. Rainier, Washington. Left: Dawn light on the mountains just south of Hart's Pass, Washington. Below: Hartenbaum standing on the PCT northern terminus monument at the US-Canada border.

Really? I'd done it. And it was starting to sink in, finally, two days after touching the northern monument. It seemed too ridiculous to be real. I'd walked from Mexico to Canada. I stopped wanting to downplay it. Sure, all I did was walk a lot. But I did walk a lot.

Reflections

Wandering around in the woods for months on end gives you a lot of time to think. So on the rare occasion when I wasn't thinking about water, or how badly I wanted to eat a burger, fries, and a milkshake, I had time to reflect. On myself, and the world in general.

A friend of mine once said that she thought nature was beautiful but that humans did not belong there. That she felt like she was trespassing. I never felt that way. And while walking through the wilderness, I could exist without the pressure to present myself to social expectation. The trees do not care if you are there. You are part of the landscape just by existing. We, as humanity, in our constant striving for progress and perfection, have forgotten a little about the importance of simply existing. We've forgotten that things don't need to have a pre-designed purpose. Nature is where we come from, what sustains us, and where we will return. We can't cut ourselves off from it no matter how hard we try to insulate ourselves in modern comforts.

On the flip side, after roughing it in the woods for so long, I've gained a newfound appreciation for the great boons of civilization. Top-tier luxuries include: bridges, indoor plumbing,

and milkshakes. So I suppose there's a balance to be struck.

I reflected at length on the necessary interconnectedness of the world. People need one another. Humanity has succeeded because of our ability to assist one another and build things greater than ourselves. We're living in a time of political division and polarized opinions, but we still need each other. We need to recognize kindness as the foundation of our world. Can we do it? Can we extend kindness outside our immediate circles? Can we be angels in the everyday, give magic to tired strangers? I think we can. I think we must. And expressing that kindness can be as simple and small as holding a door open for someone, or greeting them politely, or carrying their groceries for them, or baking them a loaf of bread, or thanking them for their assistance.

If small acts of kindness seem insignificant and pointless in the grand scheme of things, try looking at it this way: take one step. Now take five million more, and you've walked from Mexico to Canada. The trick is to not give up. You have to be insane, I think, to do something like this. But it's worth it.



Kayo Hartenbaum grew up in the Bay Area and currently resides in Los Altos Hills. In addition to hiking, Kayo enjoys reading, gardening, and archery.

Three Residents Appointed to Planning Commission

In June 2020, the Los Altos Hills Council appointed three town residents to the Planning Commission. Residents Jim Waschura and Birgitta Indaco are new members, while resident Jitze Couperus had served previously (this is his third term) and was re-appointed. They join existing members Rajiv Patel, currently the Chair, and Ed Smith who began their terms in 2018. The Planning Commission frequently reviews difficult or large residential applications, although almost any land use permit that requires a variance or receives significant neighborhood opposition will come before the Planning Commission. Since the commissioners are fellow residents, they empathize with the views of the applicant and neighbors. They also review subdivisions, modifications to the ordinances or General Plan, and provide recommendations to the council. Planning commissioners serve a term of four years.



JITZE COUPERUS

What do you enjoy about your role?

I can take an active role in steering the further evolution of our town, and sometimes have the opportunity to be creative in figuring out how to resolve conflicts with win-win solutions.

Prior to this, how were you involved with the town?

Soon after moving into town, a neighbor persuaded me to become President of the Horseman's Association. In 1975 the Countess Besseney donated Westwind Barn and its underlying 13 acres to the town, and the Town Council was contemplating selling it off for subdivision and development. The Horsemen's Association then became embroiled in the effort to save it as a town asset. Later around 2002, my wife and I became involved in the battle to protect any significant piece of town-owned land from being sold off without a vote of the residents. The resulting "Open Space Initiative"

succeeded and protects our recreational and open spaces to this day.

Upon finding myself retired, I applied for a position on the board of our local Fire District, where I served for two terms. After that, I was appointed to the town's Planning Commission where I currently serve.

How did your previous experience prepare you for your current role?

In my first career as Policeman in Kenya, the top priority in my job description was to help resolve inter-tribal conflicts before they escalated and got out of hand. That experience is invaluable on the Planning Commission.

Tell us about your education and work experience?

I grew up in Uganda but went to boarding school in Kenya. After graduating High School, I spent two years as a conscript in The Kings African Rifles and The Kenya Police.

Subsequently, I went to Britain to learn a trade, and became indentured as an apprentice with a Government Agency in a new field known at that time as "Computing Machinery". I attended their "Training Establishment" at a small village just North of London called Bletchley, and did research at their labs in Dollis Hill (London).

On completing my apprenticeship I was employed by a British computer manufacturer and became involved with some very large mainframe computers in

Africa and Europe for a few years. I was living in Holland when I was head-hunted by Seymour Cray – the chief architect at that time for an American manufacturer of Super Computers. He offered me a choice of jobs in either Chippewa Falls (WI) or Palo Alto (CA). I chose the latter and spent the next 32 years with that company in Research and Development.

Tell us about your family and how long have you lived in town?

I was living and working in Holland when I met my wife Nancy while she was working as a 4th-grade school teacher in The Hague. We were married and had lived there for about two years before I joined Control Data Corporation in Palo Alto in 1969. We lived in Mountain view before buying a house in town in 1973 and have lived there ever since. We have two daughters that graduated from college many years ago.

What attracted you to move to Los Altos Hills?

Starting a family made suburbia feel too cramped for us — we wanted a backyard with lots of space and as close to rural as possible, consistent with a reasonable commute distance. We love the small-town feeling, pathways, open space, and proximity to nature.

BIRGITTA INDACO

What do you enjoy about your role?

I enjoy working with residents, volunteer committee members, and city staff preparing for the agenda items. There is a lot of background work and investigation that goes on before every commission meeting. I feel we are all trying to work towards the common goal of preserving our town's rural character.

Prior to this, how were you involved with the town?

I served on the Environmental Design and Protection Committee (EDPC) as vice chairperson for almost two years, from 2018 to 2020. I also have attended many city council meetings prior to my appointment to the EDPC. I have also been a member of the Los Altos Hills Horseman's Association speaking on their behalf for the creation of the riding



ring. I am currently serving as President for the Los Altos/Los Altos Hills Newcomers Club for the past two years and conducting Zoom meetings.

How did your previous experience prepare you for your current role?

Through the EDP committee, I learned about our city policies and various ordinances while reviewing blueprints for construction and landscape plans submitted for review by the committee. I have visited more than 40 sites and viewed over 100 properties for site development review and landscape review. I also wrote EDP reports for these site visits to help the planning staff's review process for Fast Track/Site Development meetings. I continue to attend most Fast Track meetings since 2018 to learn about upcoming projects and the conditions of approval.

Tell us about your education and work experience?

I have an undergraduate degree in Computer Science from the University of Central Florida and studied Mathematics/Statistics at Uppsala University in Sweden. I worked for aerospace and computer companies before raising my family. I was owner/builder for our home from 2005 to 2007, remodeling 2000 sq. ft. and working closely with the town's building department. (I had attended a home construction course for 6 months at West Valley College before daring to do the remodel.) I have volunteered for many organizations throughout the years while my kids were in school. I have been a Master Gardener volunteer for Santa Clara County since 2009.

Tell us about your family and how long have you lived in town?

My husband and I have lived in Los Altos Hills for 25 years. I have three grown kids who all live in San Francisco.

Prior to living in town, where did you live?

We lived in Potomac, Maryland for eight years before moving to California. Prior to that, we lived in Florida.

What attracted you to move to Los Altos Hills?

We were drawn to the nature, pathways, and close proximity to San Francisco and San Jose. We enjoy the beautiful nature and setting of Los Altos Hills. It is a family-friendly community with pathways that I enjoy on a daily basis. I treasure seeing and hearing wildlife all around me. I enjoy connecting with my neighbors and many residents – it's become my home town.



JIM WASCHURA

What do you enjoy about your role?

I enjoy staying connected to residents and trying to represent their views. I enjoy discovering the nuances of each particular situation. I try to be practical and use common sense and hope to say things and ask questions that other residents would say or ask, and to communicate with applicants the way their neighbors would.

Prior to this, how were you involved with the town?

I began volunteering in the town by attending Pathway Committee meetings and later becoming an associate member of the Pathways Committee. The Pathways Committee attracted me because when my wife and I did our own remodeling we faced a step in the process that required us to provide the town with an off-road pathway easement. At the time, I didn't understand why we would be asked to do such a thing when we were only trying to add a family room and a garage to our home. Participating in the committee gave me a much better perspective of the value of our pathways system that I would like to see communicated to residents better, so they are not surprised by the situation we were surprised by.

What attracted you to serving on the planning commission?

I was very hands-on during our home remodeling. I was interested in the technical aspects of construction, engineering, fire-safe materials, and other aspects of development. I also spent time with town staff at the counter getting permits and approvals and I found I enjoyed most of this and I hoped to help other residents have a good experience as well. As I began attending Planning Commission meetings, I also became aware of some of the wider town issues such as neighborhood annexing and how to meld these neighborhoods together into one whole and reconciling different constituencies on topics such as bigger homes, equestrian access, off-road pathways, open space preservation, and others. I found that after examining these situations carefully, I developed an understanding for them that could help me

weigh-in on these subjects representing an average resident not ensconced in the controversies, and that being able to navigate around the polarization of some of these hot-button issues might be good for the town.

How did your previous experience prepare you for your current role?

I am an organizer and a detail person, which is very helpful. But my biggest preparation was probably being a spouse to my lovely wife, being a father to my three successful children, and being a business partner with my identical twin. These experiences taught me that trying to impose my own views to accomplish my own grand objective is generally not going to be successful in the end. It's much better to be collaborative with people in any process of decision making, to get a long-lasting solution that works for everybody. I've also been a youth soccer referee for a little over 10 years now. There, I've learned that generally people want to do the right thing but may need some help in understanding where the rule lines exist.

Tell us about your education and work experience?

I was educated in northeast Ohio at a small liberal arts school called Hiram College. I studied computer science and mathematics. I came to Silicon Valley in 1985 when the computer boom was taking off. I worked for 5 years at AMPEX corporation making graphics software for television broadcast products before my twin brother and I launched our own electronic test equipment start-up called SyntheSys Research. We ran the business for about 25 years, learning quite a bit that two technical people didn't know about management, operations, finance, venture capital, strategy, and leadership. Ultimately, we sold the company to a large firm in Oregon called Tektronix. Now, we are developing a second start-up in electronic test equipment with a lot more internet and web-based technologies.

Tell us about your family and how long have you lived in town?

We moved to town in July 1998. I remember this well because my youngest son was born the next day. We lived in Los Altos prior to that for about 6 years. My wife Leisa and I have three children, two of whom graduated college several years ago and one graduating in June. What we love about the town is its open spaces, the semi-rural character, the panoramic scenic views, the occasional horseback rider, the pathways, and more. We are grateful for the friendship of our neighbors and all the impressive people we've come to know as neighbors and town volunteers who are willing to extend themselves for other peoples' benefit.



TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS
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Los Altos Hills, CA 94022

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Town Newsletter Statement of Purpose

This is the official town newsletter to communicate current issues, services, and activities in Los Altos Hills to the residents of the town — to facilitate, encourage, and improve interaction between the residents and the town government. The newsletter is published quarterly. **Deadline for the next issue is May 7, 2021.**

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www.losaltoshills.ca.gov

Our Town

Our Town is published with assistance from the City Clerk, Deborah Padovan, and Town Volunteer Committees.

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Los Altos Hills City Council

Kavita Tankha, Mayor
George Tyson, Vice Mayor
Stanley Q. Mok
Lisa Schmidt
Linda Swan

City Manager

Carl Cahill

CALENDAR

MARCH 7

Sun., 10:00 – 11:00 am

9th Annual Leadership Conference

The Leadership Conference is intended for Middle and High School students eager to affect change.

Join the Youth Commission at Town Hall, RSVP today: losaltoshills.ca.gov/LeadershipConference



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Sat., 8:00 – 11:00 am*

Shred Event
Free drive-thru service for Los Altos Hills residents. Bring a max of 5 standard sized file boxes or 5 brown



paper bags of confidential/ personal paper documents to shred at Town Hall. *Or until the truck is filled.

APRIL 3

Sat., 9:00-11:00 am

Barking for Biscuits Hoppin' Hounds Kit

Donate \$10 or more to Pets in Need and get a goody bag that includes dog treats, a Hoppin' Hounds Donor Dog Bandana, and a chance to win four large gift baskets after submitting photos. Tails will be wagging visit www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/HoppinHounds.

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Thursday

Make Every Day Earth Day

Join the Los Altos Hills Community and share your personal goals and best tips to "Make Every Day Earth Day." Share your submissions at losaltoshills.ca.gov/EarthDay. A special slideshow will be shared on Thursday, April 22 for Earth Day.



MAY 1-9

Any Time

Pathways Run/Walk Self-Challenge

The official Race Start/ Finish Banner will be hung and route marked for 9 days from May 1 to May 9. You are encouraged to run or walk the course any time while maintaining 6 feet of social



distancing. The Pathways Run/Walk Self Challenge is free and open to the public. Register at lahpathwaysrun.org. An optional 2021 Pathways Run/Walk shirt is available for purchase on the website.

Calendar events are also posted on town's website: www.losaltoshills.ca.gov